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AUTHOR Garrison, Lon A.
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ABSTRACT

This report emphasizes man's need to understand the balance of nature in order to cease violation of this balance and, in fact, to improve the quality of life and man's place in the universe. Ecologically minded citizens in the United States will find the author's suggestions useful for solving environmental problems: 1) conceive of voluntary population control; 2) set a goal for clean air and water; 3) consider that we are part of the universe and are responsible for our decisions in it; 4) be aware of the existence of laws such as the 1971 Environmental Quality Act and use them to bring offenders to court; 5) become involved, along with planners, engineers, ecologists and politicians, in the planning process; 6) enter into city, state and national politics; 7) demand that longer run research be used for management of the environment; 8) urge the implementation of recycling programs; 9) examine legal standards established for environmental control to see that they are realistic; 10) expect to forego some services. (SJM)

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THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE EVANGELIST

By
Lon A. Garrison

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H. O. Kunkel, Acting Director, College Station, Texas

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THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE EVANGELIST

by

Mr. Lon A. Garrison

Director, Northeast Region
National Park Service
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mr. Garrison is a psychology graduate of Stanford University. He is a career employee with more than forty years of service in the National Park Service. He is responsible for N.P.S. activities in sixteen Northeastern states between the Mississippi River and the Atlantic Ocean, and also acts as one of the principal advisors to the Director of the Park Service.

Mr. Garrison's previous experience includes that of Superintendent of Big Bend National Park and of Yellowstone National Park; Chief of Conservation and Protection (Washington, D.C. office), and Director of the Midwest Region of the National Park Service. His background in resource management and public use assisted in expediting the Service's MISSION 66 program and the current Park Service involvement in the urban programs. In recognition of his distinguished achievements, he has been nominated for the Civil Service League's Career Service Award.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE EVANGELIST[1]

I speak to you today primarily from a background of over forty years of conservation work and my own deep official and personal concern in the dilemmas of American environment, particularly in urban America. What is my thing? I have two things.

The first, of course, is preservation of the great resources of nature and of history that we have in America. The second is the human value of these resources for such goals as the ethos of the human spirit, esthetics, inspiration and a richer life for today and for tomorrow. Call it a "Quality of Life."

Always in the past years of conservation concern there has been a small group of philosophers, university teachers, researchers, even some government men who were way ahead. I speak of John Muir, Frederick Law Olmsted, Stephen Mather, Horace Albright, Robert Marshall, Gifford Pinchot, Roosevelt, and many others, all of them contemporaries whom I have known. I traveled with Gifford Pinchot, I warmly admire the enduring Horace Albright, and I shared their visions of the future and believed in them. It is startling to see so much of it reality today.

I mean that through their leadership we have today such things as parks, forests, wildlife reserves, and historic sites. Similarly we have art galleries and museums. Their resource preservation goals have created opportunity for contemporary adventures in this evanescent and fragile quality of life. They enrich lives for thousands of us today.

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[1] Opening Address Presented to the Symposium on Environmental Awareness at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas; April 22, 1970.

What are the contemporary tie-ins? I speak of new National Park Service concepts of living farms, living history, history recognized as an environmental indicator, awareness of environmental problems in the inner city, summer-in-the-parks programs, art in the parks, direct awareness of our own ecology and environment, a search for a contemporary ethic of man and his world. The present environment is pretty badly fractured--but no one knows what kind of a dilemma it is. We each seem to see parts of it--our part. So, one expert tells us that disaster from over use of our energy pool will be in the form of a greenhouse effect from carbon dioxide and trapped atmospheric particulates, and the icecaps may melt and drown our coastlines. Another interprets the facts as leading to a new, bigger, colder ice age. Either way it is bad.

Or the population problem--most demographers cry of crises, but Ben Wattenberg, writing in the "New Republic" just last month, claims the problem is one of distribution and not of numbers. That is, statistically we are not crowded in the United States. We still have more square feet of space per person than most nations--the problem, he says, is that we stack them up in rows in the megalopolis and we create open space behind it.

This is what I mean by confusion, because I consider other factors such as the available energy, pollutants, excess heat, quality of life in the cities--but I suspect that I may oversimplify just as Wattenberg. The doomsday approach dooms us all because of the sins of our fathers which we are repeating today. But then the Public Relations men and industry get in their licks and we learn that more technology will save the day. Just Keep the Faith!

I accept that reality is somewhere between the doomed-and-damned on one hand and the happy, business-as-usual unbelievers on the other. And frankly, I think a little pollution is here to stay. Could we have all our streams and lakes of distilled water, or a lovely sunset without some dust in the air?

But I also believe that we had better work at keeping this pollution leveled off in terms of a little instead of the maxi-blanket that we have. It is a planetary problem, but I think we start where we are and keep the Natural Law or God's law in mind. We cannot know the end of our day but I think we must focus our think-through-power, plan reasonable ways to keep going, keep the best, and keep the Law!

I spend only a few more minutes on dilemmas--but the laws of nature always balance their equations of interaction. Man's equations often do not balance because he has air conditioners, processed food, automobiles, and garbage. He has atomic power and excess heat to dissipate. We call these left-overs, pollution.

Water runs down hill. All matter is indestructable. Laws of gravity, energy, all of nature's cycles are still on the books and self enforcing. This is the dilemma.

So when the Highway Department in Indiana piles a winter's supply of salt for road icing next to Pinhook Bog, part of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, we become alarmed because a bog is a low place by definition and even salt water runs down hill. Next time around we hope for a happier ending than a dike, but it is a simple ecological lesson indeed!

So, in environmental problems of the day, what can a practical but empathic observer read as something to do?

Now, I not only have a long background in natural resources, I live in center city Philadelphia today, and from this mix I list a relevant, contemporary decalogue of concepts.

First, I learned long ago in wildlife biology that each species will increase to the point of full use of food supply available. Some

species seem to have a stress or a foreknowledge to stop just before crises--do people have this? We do not know this but, we do know that while population is still on the up-swing in the United States, the rate of increase has declined. I must conclude that while a zero population growth rate is desirable, it will not be absolutely or immediately disastrous if we keep on slowing down and reach it like next year. When we begin to talk this way, it is more apt to work this way! And my concern of course is that overuse is ruining quality park experience. We cannot keep on going up! So even if our 18% of people who use the parks is constant, the discrete number continues to increase.

Statistically anyway, population is a personal problem for that select group of females age 14 to 45 to resolve with the help of males with something of a wider age spread. And with new legislative approaches to abortion, with new emphasis on the pill or other contraceptives, even with some evidence of a new/old morality returning, it is at last a "speakable" problem, a "thinkable" solution.

If you cannot help, at least do not be part of the problem!

Second, this population problem is now paramount, but I feel one other major dimension of concern. That is the oxygen supply. Threats to this from oil spills, car exhausts, and pesticides, are the fastest-gun-in-the-world, and it is aimed at you--at everybody!

We all understand the energy cycle--sun, plants photosynthesis, usage of carbon dioxide, production of oxygen as a waste product--we need oxygen, and we need it every day--we are running on a short inventory!

Every forested hill is an oxygen factory, but I am told that about 70% of our daily supply comes from phytoplankton in the sea. This is a daily miracle. The sun is our Sky-God, and from Mother Sea and Mother Earth, we get our daily air and our daily bread and our daily energy

supply through the miracle of photosynthesis. This is really what gives our world its magic of beauty and color. The first moon-shot passengers record the beauty of our earth compared with the bleakness and grayness of space and moon. Rene Dubos comments on this in his Theology of the Earth--".....what gives vibrant colors and exciting variety to the surface of the earth is the fact that it is literally a living organism. The microbes, the plants, the animals, and man have generated on its surface conditions that as far as we can know, occur nowhere else in that part of the universe we might hope to reach."

And what do we do about it? A newly proposed National Recreation Area l.es between Breezy Point in New York and Sandy Point in New Jersey. The daily flow of polluted water the rivers and the tides carry by here each day is estimated at 1.5 billion gallons. New York City oceanic dump grounds are ten miles beyond at the edge of the Continental Shelf, and great barges pass here daily to this disposal area with trash and garbage. It has created a surface area of twenty square miles that is completely polluted and sterile. I try to calculate this in cubic miles and it is enormous.

New Jersey is not even part of the picture; they dump their's somewhere else. How long can Mother Sea continue to ingest all these leftovers while still cooperating as our oxygen factory?

The goal must be clean air and clean water, not tolerances and limits and not how much we can get away with for a while longer. Unless the philosophy and goals are reassessed the brightest technological advances will not pay off any more than present practice is paying off in keeping our environment clean.

Third, what is our Environmental Ethic? We know of Aldo Leopold's suggested land ethic but have not really done anything about it. For the bigger picture can we get to the heart of our problem with a simple statement that we belong to the universe? It does not belong to us--we

belong to it, and we belong simply and completely and inalienably. And we need to pledge quietly and honestly that we can leave our world better than we found it--each of us, and maybe that is our environmental ethic! If it is as simple as that for you--wonderful!

If you need to swear allegiance--remember that on Earth Day Eve, April 21--just last night--a group of citizens like yourselves met at Independence Hall in Philadelphia to sign and renew a Declaration of Interdependence! Man, world, nature, living law--whether in your heart or on your record, we need this commitment to a credo of mutual support --an environmental ethic. Why not write your own?

Fourth, awareness is not a solution. But it is the first step on the road to a viable continuum! So, as with the length of our day, we start from here. Many state that this is the "Decade of Environment!" If so, let us be about it! Our attorney and advocate friend Yannaconne very simply states that the price of progress is law suits. This may or may not be, but the major thrust towards environmental quality must be moved ahead. We see this dimension of action in many places--Mineral King in California, Sylvania in Michigan, Tinicum in Philadelphia, Storm King on the Hudson River Expressway in New York--progress because a concerned group of citizens take on a giant utility and state and federal agencies to demand that the total public interest be measured in something besides dollars. Is the major contribution of this generation to be pollution and garbage?

If we still think that quantity is better than quality--that cost is more valid than value--see you in Court sometime! And, the National Park Service is not immune!

Strangely, our ancestors left us some laws we can use, such as an 1899 law prohibiting dumping of materials in a navigable stream, that bulwarks some of the abatement cases. And, the Environmental Quality Act of January 1, 1970 carries a surprising amount of muscle.

We are increasingly like Pogo--"We have met the enemy and it is us!" Do we like our looks in that mirror?

Fifth, let us look at regional or multi-purpose planning. We recognize some of the physical aspects--interstate highways must be regionally planned so that they meet at state lines and have similar standards. But what I speak of here has more depth, more clout than these simple and sensible arithmetic arrangements to which I refer.

I mean planning across resource and bureau, agency or political boundaries. The city and the county and the state and nations must sit down together on land-use plans, zoning, circulation, and utilities. And, they must include professional planners, engineers, ecologists, citizens groups, and politicians as well!

All of these new people in America plus the earlier ones--are they to have houses and televisions and dishwashers? Obviously, services to living people will be provided. Hard decisions of planning, parking, zoning with a bite, and of design criteria must be made. How can these decisions be viable without political reality? Citizens, youth, the professional planners, and the political all must be involved or the kite will not go up! And this really leads into the next point.

Sixth, why not run for office yourself? Because as we go on we have a new list of questions. These go to citizen involvement--to what organizations do you belong? If you do not find any going your way, can you create your own support group? Has it got enough clout to mean anything? What can you do about zoning and scenic easements?

We seek the Holy Grail of environmental quality, but we read the realities: average age of 25, 1970 census, 1971 reapportionment of the United States House of Representatives and most State Legislatures, one man one vote, increasing urbanization, 1972 election, 1973 a New Congress! What are we doing today to reach these new legislators with totally urban

backgrounds? So, I suggest to you young people--how about getting into politics yourselves? If you do not like the political interest groups you find, set up your own! But let the power structure, the establishment, know who you are there, that you care, and that you can be counted upon! One way or another--you can be counted upon!

A Massachusetts community has long been proud of its quality of living and low density population. All lots, three acres or more, single unit homes only, minimum 1200 square feet floor space per house--it is expensive but they like it. Now, planners seriously propose this community for low-income, minority group high-rise apartments.

This sounds outrageous. But do you see the other side of the logic? Here is low intensity use in an otherwise almost urban community--how much do you protect the landowners? And the low-income group that wants in? There can be little clear black or white in this kind of decision. You just do the best you know how!

How do we manage this dilemma we call private property rights? We bang into this everytime we turn around. What is equity here?

Seventh, a lot of the things that need examination and action must be deferred because we do not know what to do about it. I am saying that we have far more questions than we have answers! We seek a balance of our world resources and our total life needs and I do not mean human life alone.

This has been a beautiful world for some of us, but it is shabby for too many of us today. As we try to create the Ethos of man and his world --environmental value system--we find missing pieces. Some of these are esoteric and in the philosophical and inspirational class, but others simply tell us that we just do not know the balance we need to all live together on our space ship. As the one creature with a mind and ability to tinker aggressively, we simply move too fast, too often with inadequate

knowledge! A giant research program for factual data to guide management is urgent. Great universities such as this must lead the way!

And, what are the differences between palliatives and alternatives? Here is a great field for involvement! Know Thyself? Heavens, let us know our world too! We might meet a friend!

Eighth, let us look some more at resources and talk about recycling. Some native indians eat a fish, pass the bones through the smoke and throw these back into the streams with a prayer for regrowth of the fish to again furnish food. This is a primitive recycling. In our world, what do we need in raw materials? How much do we have? Does it make sense to ship tin in for manufacture when we end by throwing most of it away? How can we recycle more of our trash? Our program today just hides it - why not try to get it all back into circulation and use it? We do this with water, we do it with steel probably more than any other solid waste. In Philadelphia there is a giant machine for shredding car bodies--2000 a day. It is ugly, but it is our environmental machine. Why are we so fussy about recycling? Most of our civilization is built right on top of older ones and it is mainly from trash piles that we learn of our ancestors. Would you be willing to be known entirely by the things you throw away? Could anyone reconstruct a reasonable picture of life in the United States today from our trash piles? I believe that even historic restoration programs are recycling as we convert old structures into usable ones for today. And in trash recycling proposals we keep in mind that the 7000 tons a year produced, for example, in Yellowstone National Park is miniscule. Philadelphia has 9 million.

Ninth, are the basic legal standards established for tolerable quality of water and air realistic or simple political compromises? I believe that as conditions change, the standards must too. That is, 96% removal of fly ash in a fossil fueled thermal power plant may have been satisfactory three years ago, but when population growth and density puts high rises in the path of the fallout and industry now has

competence to get out 99%, why should the community have to live with the earlier standard?

How valid are present standards? And, how are international environmental problems to be solved? Pollution of air and water respects no state or national boundaries. I ask a lot of questions because we do not have answers. These quests you must follow yourselves. Those articulate and relevant greyheads such as myself, simply pray that you do not suddenly get old, mature, establishment-minded, and return to the dollar-value-cost-benefit-ratios that have created so much of our morass.

Dumping in the sea, a river, the air was free. If a new manufacturer has to clean up pollution, what is equitable for the old ones who have priority pollution rights? How much extra should government or the consumer pay in defense of public interest? We need cooperative formulae on cost sharing, phase approaches on clean-up, broadly representative coordinated research. National Parks hope to set the example, to be the canary in the cage in the mine, to serve as an environmental early warning system.

Tenth, I simply direct attention to discussions on the "New Life Style." This involves a going-back in many ways. It means abandonment of some of the services of civilization. Young people I know who do their thing here park their cars or do not own one. They ride public transportation or bicycles. They do not purchase food in plastic or non-degradable or non-returnable containers. They compost all possible trash; they completely flatten tin cans. And, they carry trash to the dump every two weeks and two adults and two youngsters produce only one grocery bag full in that time.

How successful can a primitive be today?

Now in conclusion, let us return to quality of life as a right of all mankind. The residual that some of our urban citizens get is tragic,

but it is all that our machine produces. I mean the way of life that seems the only pattern for children who live in the inner city. I have a firm belief that the environment is simply where you are. It may be the open woods in a park or it may be a street with rats and junk and no play space. Neither is complete in today's context without appreciation of the other. And, it is not a full solution to take the sidewalk youngsters to a summer camp. They, even as you and I, must find somewhere their own answer to Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?

How much of this can a boy find in his environment? We may not be able to give him the clean woods that we know, but we have failed if we do not give him understanding of his own plug into the total environmental machine. He needs to know of creation and evolution and technology in both its enriching and its strictures. He needs to know of pollution and its crippling effects, and he needs to know how to have a try at making his world just a bit better. If our machine provides this informed opportunity, then we shall have moved a long ways. We shall begin to have relevance to this most important group of young people.

Why are they so important? They are a concern simply because they are there, because they are people and our next generation.

We have the gleam, but we lack the know-how to define our problems in today's relevancy--we lack the knowledge for definitive answers. We just come up with more questions sparked by our first level inquiries. But in each of us is a frightened soul that recoils before the inhuman ponderance of the mixed up environment we face.

We seek equilibrium between resources, use, amenities and people. We seek a destiny which suddenly has inescapably become a global configuration. So we seek out-of-doors--parks, an Antean escape, a refresher. We are in a machine programmed for interactions. There are no separate systems and resources. Everything is in motion and it is

up to us to find the right buttons to push to harness the energy! I repeat simply--we do not now know the end of our day--abrupt or gradual. We believe that we face this zero hour, but because we are human, busy, organized, somewhat intelligent, we can achieve at least interim delay.

What does this mean in simple words? Water runs down hill. Understand land, nature, natural law--and do not fight it--work with it. A "Family of Man" approach is needed, and a clear conscious dedication from each of us.

We will survive April 22--now what about April 23? We shall, we must find ways to convert the enthusiasms, the concerns of today into reality programs for tomorrow. This goes back to our Ethic--to our willingness to keep our eye on the main thrust and do not let down!

A little girl in Philadelphia wrote of her concern for better living:

What I would like for a better living.
I would like to live without dirt.
I would also like to live on a wider street.
I would like to breathe in clean air.
I would like to see better buildings.
I would like more schools, churches and fewer bars.
Questions:
Can we improve the writings on the walls?
Can we have more views of flowers to look at?

Deborah

And, if in our metaphor we can create environmental flowers for Debbie, we have our "Quality of Life" well on the way. We have helped our world to have flowers to look at. We have helped make our world a better place to live.